

10 Steps to Sleeping Better Than You Ever Have in 2015



Sleeping well is a key component for improving your physical and mental state

Most people want to look and feel better. New Year's resolution lists are filled with entries pertaining to six-pack abs, bigger muscles, losing weight and working out more. Yet most people ignore the one thing which plays a key role in facilitating all of the aforementioned activities -- sleep.

Sleeping well is a key component of changing your body composition and improving your physical and mental state. The better you sleep, the more efficient you are at work, personal [relationships](#) and making effective decisions about your life. Because sleeping is something which comes so naturally to us, most people don't really plan to improve the quality of their sleep. Here's what you can do to change that in 2015.

1. Add a sleep-related goal to your list.

You can't improve what you don't quantify. Set a goal to improve an aspect of your sleep -- sleeping for eight hours, going to bed early, etc.

2. Motivate yourself.

Focusing on a goal repeatedly lets it seep deeper into your consciousness, thereby making it more likely that you won't fall off the wagon. Make a list of the things which sleeping better can help you

achieve -- increased mental performance, a better physique etc. Keep this list somewhere prominent so you can look at it often.

3. Take action.

Making pro-and-con and to-do lists is all well and good, but it all means nothing if you don't take action on it. Even if you aren't able to go from sleeping erratically to a full eight hours overnight, take small steps towards your goal. For example, you might start by going to bed 10 minutes early each day. Every week, shave off another 10 minutes until you've hit your desired mark.

4. Create the best possible sleeping environment for yourself.

You need to make your bedroom the ideal place to get quality, uninterrupted sleep. Remove any unnecessary lights and other distracting objects from the room. This includes blinking routers, mobile phone notification lights and any gadgets which produce noise. Make your bedroom as technology-free as possible.

If you can't eliminate the sources of light entirely, use a sleep mask. Use earplugs if you have a lot of noise in your surroundings. Set the air-conditioner to a cool temperature, and use a humidifier if possible.

5. Create a bedtime ritual for yourself.

You might find it difficult to fall asleep earlier than you are used to in the beginning. Start doing some meditation or breathing exercises for five to 10 minutes before you go to bed. You can find plenty of beginner routines online. If you prefer more hands-on instructions, you can download an app or an audio recording of a meditation teacher whose voice resonates with you.

6. Avoid looking at screens.

Mobile phones, laptops, tablets and TV screens are all known to interfere with the quality of your sleep. The light given out by these electronic displays interferes with your sleep cycles. Try not to look at any screens for at least a couple of hours before you fall asleep. Take a light book to bed if you must.

7. Cut down on your beverages.

Sodas, tea and coffee all interfere with your body's sleeping rhythms in sneaky ways. Avoid having any caffeine after lunch. If you absolutely must have a beverage, go for some decaf or a cup of green tea. Avoid chocolates or other sugary snacks immediately before bedtime.

8. Don't stay up too much on weekends.

Sometimes, you might have to attend parties or social events that take you past your sleep deadline. However, if you frequently mess up your sleep on weekends, the deficit will carry over to the rest of

the week. Whenever possible, try to avoid staying out too late. If you can't avoid these events, make sure you don't drink too much when you're there.

9. Take a nap once in a while.

Short naps have been shown to help with reducing sleep deficits. Tread carefully though, because if you're trying to reset your schedule, naps might interfere with your progress. Keep your naps down to 30 minutes or less.

10. Stay accountable to yourself or to a group.

Monitoring your progress goes a long way towards creating a positive feedback loop. Use an application on your phone or join an online community like Coach.me where you can join in with thousands of other users who share the same goals as you. Looking at your progress will keep you motivated on days when you aren't feeling up to the task.

In summation, let 2015 be the year you finally learn how to sleep well. Your body will thank you and respond in ways which will go far beyond the effects of crash diets or risky supplements. Sleeping is free. All it takes is a little bit of effort.

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